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INFO RHEHNSC/ NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RHMFIISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L VILNIUS 000309

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FOR PM/RSAT AND EUR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/02/2017

TAGS: MARR MASS MOPS PREL PTER IZ LH

SUBJECT: LITHUANIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE NEW WAY FORWARD IN
IRAQ

REF: A) VILNIUS 121 B) TALLINN 277 C) STATE 54925

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Rebecca Dunham for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)
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¶1. (C) We have been working intensely with the GOL to maintain the Lithuanian troop presence in Multinational Division South East (MND-SE) since the February announcements of British and Danish troop drawdowns from Basra. Following what appeared to be internal wrangling over what Lithuania's next steps should be (ref A), our high-level discussions on the future role of Lithuanian troops in Iraq have been nearly constant. Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Debra Cagan visited Vilnius on March 26 and pressed for the continued Lithuanian commitment of a combat formation in Iraq. Later, during the U.S.-Baltic Bilateral Working Group meetings, April 10-12 in Tallinn, OSD Principal Director for European and NATO Policy Anthony Aldwell also raised the GOL's future participation in the Iraq coalition (ref B). In addition, the Ambassador, DCM, and DATT have discussed this issue in depth on numerous occasions with senior-level interlocutors, up to and including President Adamkus and Prime Minister Kirkilas.

¶2. (C) Based on comments from the Lithuanian Ministry of National Defense and our DATT's conversations with his British and Danish counterparts, we know that the current Lithuanian contingent in Iraq is wholly dependent for logistical support upon the Danes, and, through them, the British. The GOL met with British MOD representatives on April 20 to discuss how Lithuanian troops in MND-SE could continue to receive logistical support, and what their mission would be. The British side presented two options. One was participation in a force protection element. Aside from purely static defense, this option would also require active patrolling in an exclusion zone around the guarded facility. The second option focuses on training. The Lithuanians could conceivably do both missions as long as the force protection element is fully manned and equipped at all

times. The GOL seems satisfied with these options, but has not chosen one yet. All GOL interlocutors have made it clear that the role and size of the GOL presence will be a political decision, but have also reassured us that Lithuanian troops will remain in Iraq in some capacity.

¶3. (C) We will continue to work with the GOL's leaders as

they decide on Lithuania's future role in Iraq.

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